

Psychological Well-Being Among The New Primary School Teachers In Ouargla - Algeria

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Abstract:

The study aimed to identify the level of psychological well-being among a sample of new primary school teachers in Ouargla province. It also sought to determine the relationship between the teacher's gender and specialization and their level of psychological well-being. To achieve the study objectives, a descriptive exploratory approach was adopted. The study relied on the Psychological Well-Being Index (PWI) by Cummins (translated by Tiliouine, 2009) and the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) by Watson, Clark, and Tellegen (1988), translated by Mesoudi (2016). The two scales were applied to a sample of 195 male and female teachers. The statistical analysis showed a high level of psychological well-being among the teachers, no differences between genders in psychological well-being, and no differences in PWB between Arabic, French, and English teachers.

Keywords: Psychological well-being, Personal well-being Index, Positive and negative affect, Primary school teacher

Introduction:

Teacher training programs focus on developing their professional competencies and enhancing their mental and cognitive abilities by providing them with knowledge and skills to improve their job performance. The success of the educational process, in terms of planning and execution, depends on the level of teachers' performance in their educational tasks. As emphasized by NICHOLSON, the good preparation of teachers reflects on their achievements and academic and educational competence (Mahdi, 1991, p. 39). However, teacher preparation and training are only complete if they address the psychological and emotional aspects. The quality of teaching performance requires a set of psychological competencies in teachers, whose foundation is built on psychological well-being.

This study emphasizes the importance of teachers' job satisfaction, as it adds meaning to individuals' perceptions and activities, helping them achieve many of their goals. It is also one of the most crucial needs for interpreting human behavior (Alimat, 1994, p. 23). Besides, the significance of teachers' satisfaction with their profession is one of the predictors of behavior. According to Campbell et al(1976), a portion of adults' life satisfaction variance can be attributed to job satisfaction.

According to Wall et al(1978), the feeling of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with work is linked to an individual's psychological, physical, and family health. A positive feeling of satisfaction with work can lead to positive psychological health. Due to the importance of psychological health in motivating teachers to perform their duties well, achieve educational goals, reach high levels of satisfaction, and increase their productivity, the focus on psychological health aspects has become extremely important.

The World Health Organization defines *psychological health* as "a state of well-being in which the individual realizes their abilities, can cope with the ordinary stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community."

Psychological health provides a foundation for emotions, thoughts, impressions, knowledge, communication relationships, and positive behaviors. Psychological health is not desirable for its own sake but because it serves as a source for acquiring, protecting, and accumulating human, material, natural, and social capital.

One aspect of teachers' psychological health is psychological well-being, a topic in positive psychology that has received significant attention in recent decades. In this research, we will focus on the personal perspective of well-being, specifically in educational work, considered one of life's most essential areas.

In the Arabic dictionary, *well-being* is a calm relaxation, free from annoyance and disturbance. In English, it is composed of three words: "psychological," meaning mental; "well," signifying a good or healthy state; and "being," meaning existence. This phrase refers to well-being, good mental health, or psychological wellness. Some have translated this phrase into Arabic as "al-rafahiya al-nafsiya." "Psychological well-being."

Ryff (1995) defines *psychological well-being* as the positive sense of one's state manifested through behavioral indicators that reflect one's high satisfaction with oneself and life in general, continuous striving to achieve personally valued goals and meanings, autonomy in setting the direction and path of one's life, and establishing and maintaining positive relationships with others. (Hmihed and Chribet, 2022, p. 29).

Tlemsani (2015) indicates that *psychological well-being* is determined by an objective aspect called objective psychological well-being, which relies on specific objective indicators defined by international organizations, and a subjective aspect known as personal psychological well-being, which is based on an individual's self-assessment of his satisfaction with life.

2- Problematic:

Psychological well-being is considered one of the most significant topics in positive psychology, as it indicates mental health. Studies have shown its contribution to supporting positive individual behaviors, such as self-efficacy, professional satisfaction, professional commitment, professional integration, and job performance.

Psychological well-being in the workplace is essential in its relationship with performance and professional compatibility, as supported by several psychological studies. For instance, Abu Lail(2022) demonstrated a relationship between professional compatibility and psychological well-being among special education teachers in Taif, Jeddah, and Riyadh. Douri(2021) found a significant relationship between psychological well-being and job performance among high school teachers in Tikrit. Chain & all(2022) conducted on a sample of civilian pilots in Chinese and Taiwanese airlines revealed a positive correlation between psychological flexibility, psychological well-being, and job performance. Additionally, Vincent&all(2021) confirmed the predictive capacity of psychological well-being on professional integration among a sample of British and Iranian English language teachers.

As confirmed by Khalifat & Al-Matarneh (2010), an increasing sense of pressure and dissatisfaction leads to a decline in job performance and the emergence of detrimental behavioral patterns such as despair and frustration. These behavioral aspects negatively affect the educational institution regarding reduced job performance (Al-Douri, 2021, p. 508).

Sointu (2005) explained through longitudinal studies of psychological well-being from 1980 to 2000 that psychological well-being is linked to policies, health, prosperity in a country, and personal comfort (Tlemsani, 2015, p. 27). This indicates that psychological well-being varies based on family, professional, social, economic, and political conditions.

This was also corroborated by the study of Sooyeon & al(2022), which pointed out that despite the similarities in teachers' experiences (in Korea and the United States), the sources of psychological well-being may vary. Therefore, it is essential to consider backgrounds to enhance psychological well-being and positive practices among teachers.

In the same context, the study by Sooyeon& al (2022) affirmed a correlation between the psychological well-being of early childhood teachers in Korea and the United States and their interaction with children. However, the degree of psychological well-being, interaction with children, and the correlation between them differed between the two countries.

In a study conducted by Tilouine(2012) in Algeria, the results showed that the level of psychological well-being in Algeria in 2003 was 52%, while it remained stable at 40% in both 2006 and 2008 and then increased to 46% in 2011 (Massaoudi, 2016, p. 154).

Based on the preceding, this study aims to identify the level of psychological well-being among a sample of newly appointed primary school teachers. This sample was chosen because the primary education stage is the most demanding, as teachers deal with very young students and have long teaching hours. Additionally, their salaries are relatively lower than teachers' salaries in other educational stages. The study's problematic revolves around the question: What is the level of psychological well-being among new primary school teachers?

2-1- Hypotheses:

To address the study's problematic, the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. The psychological well-being of the study sample is high.
2. There are differences in psychological well-being between genders.
3. Psychological well-being differs among the study sample based on the language of teaching (Arabic, French, English).

2-2- S Objectives:

The study aims to determine the nature of psychological well-being among newly appointed primary school teachers and assess differences in psychological well-being between genders and teachers of different specializations.

2-3- Study Terminology:

- **Psychological well-being:** Defined by Okun & Stock (1987) as a comprehensive construct that refers to individuals' emotional reactions to their life experiences based on both positive and negative feelings. (Hmihed and Chribet, 2022, p. 29). Massaoudi (2016) defines it as a comprehensive assessment of overall life satisfaction, including balancing positive and negative emotions.
- **Newly appointed primary school teachers:** These are primary school teachers in the Arabic, French, and English languages who were integrated into permanent positions in the 2022/2022 academic year and work in the districts of Ouargla city.

3- Method and Procedures:

3-1- Study Methodology: The study adopted a descriptive-exploratory approach, as its objective is to determine the nature of psychological well-being among individuals of both genders and various specializations.

3-2- Participants:

The study's population consists of primary school teachers who were integrated into permanent positions in the 2022/2023 academic year, based on Executive Decree (22-461). They received pedagogical training at the "Abdelmajid Boumada" Secondary School in Ouargla in July 2023. The total number of these teachers is 560, both male and female, specializing in Arabic, English, and French languages.

Two scales were distributed to a sample of teachers, which consisted of 224 teachers, representing 40% of the population. After data collection, only 195 responses were considered valid for statistical analysis.

Table (1): Sample characteristics by gender

	N	%
Male	28	14.4%
Females	167	85.6%
Total	195	100%

Table (02): Sample characteristics according to language of teaching

	N	%
English	37	19%
French	40	20.5%
Arabic	118	60.5%
Total	195	100%

3-3-Instruments:

After reviewing previous studies on this topic, it was found that some studies used the Psychological Well-Being Scale by Ryff (1989), while others used the Satisfaction with Life Scale, the Life Satisfaction Scale, and the Affect Balance Scale.

In a study conducted by Llosada-Gistau et al. (2015), the International Survey of Children's Well-being (ISCWeB¹) questionnaire was used

¹ (ISCWeB): the International Survey of Children's Well-Being

and adapted to the Spanish context. This questionnaire consists of two parts:

1. Personal Well-Being Index-School Children (PWI-SC7)
2. Overall Life Satisfaction (OLS)

Argyle (1993) and Myers and Diener (1995) argue that psychological well-being comprises three essential components: SWL² (cognitive component), positive affect, and negative affect. (Massaoudi, 2016, p. 24).

In this study, psychological well-being was measured using two scales: the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Personal Well-Being Index - PWI³), as translated and modified by Tilouine (2009), and the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS⁴) by Watson, Clark, and Tellegen (1988), as translated by Massaoudi (2016).

Thus, psychological well-being = the overall life satisfaction (personal well-being) + affect balance.

- The Satisfaction with Life Scale (PWI - Personal Well-Being Index):

This scale consists of (8) items that are answered on a scale from (0), meaning "not satisfied at all," to (10), meaning "very satisfied." The total scores on this scale can range from (0) to (80) points. The scale is interpreted as follows:

- Less than (27) points: Low level
- From (27) to (54) points: Moderate level
- More than (54) points: High level

- The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS):

- This scale measures life satisfaction from an emotional perspective. It consists of (20) items distributed across two dimensions: (10) representing positive affect (PA) and (10) representing negative affect (NA). Responses are rated on a

² SWL : Satisfaction with life

³ PWI : Personal Well-being Index

⁴ PANAS: Positive and Negative Affect Schedule

five-point scale: Very much (5)/ Much (4)/ Moderately (3)/ Slightly (2)/ Not at all (1).

- The score for each item on each dimension ranges from (10 to 50) points, and the overall scale score ranges from (20 to 100) points.
- Positive Affect Score above (30): Indicates life satisfaction from an emotional perspective and increased well-being.
- Negative Affect Score below (30): Indicates life satisfaction from an emotional perspective and increased well-being.
- Life Satisfaction (Emotional) = Positive Affect + Negative Affect, and as the score approaches (60), it indicates Affect Balance.

3-4- Psychometric Properties of the tool:

- The study relied on the validity and reliability results of Massaoudi (2016). He assessed the tool's validity using the peripheral comparison method factor analysis and internal consistency. The results demonstrated the validity of the scale. Additionally, he employed the split-half method and Cronbach's alpha coefficient to assess reliability. Reliability coefficients ranged from 0.73 to 0.85.

3-5- Data Analysis:

- Mean, standard deviation; and percentages were used to describe sample characteristics.
- t-test for a single sample was employed to test differences in mean life satisfaction scores.
- An independent samples t-test was used to examine gender differences in life satisfaction.
- One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was applied to test differences in life satisfaction scores based on the language of teaching.

4- Results and Discussion:

4-1- Hypothesis 1:

H_0 : There is no statistically significant difference between the theoretical mean of the psychological well-being scale and the mean scores of the sample individuals.

After calculating the means of the sample individuals' scores on the life satisfaction scale, the life satisfaction scale from the emotional aspect, and overall psychological well-being, they were compared to their theoretical means using a one-sample t-test. The results were as follows:

Table (03): Significance of the difference between the theoretical mean and the arithmetic mean in psychological well-being

	Mean	Theoretical Mean	one sample t-test	P-value	Satisfaction level
Personal Well-being Index(PWI)	60.51	40	26.102	0.000	High
Positive affect(PA)	37.74	30	19.494	0.000	High
Negative affect(NA)	22.70	30	14.237	0.000	High
Psychological Well-Being(PWB)	120.95	100	23.457	0.000	High

The results indicate that the means for personal well-being and positive affect are higher than the theoretical means, with a statistically significant difference at a p-value of (0.00). The theoretical mean of negative affect is lower than the theoretical mean, and the difference is statistically significant at a p-value of (0.000).

Additionally, the mean for individuals' scores in overall psychological well-being at (120.95) is higher than the theoretical mean, with a statistically significant difference at a p-value of (0.000). These results suggest an increase in personal well-being, positive affect, and overall psychological well-being, with a decrease in negative affect, indicating a rise in personal well-being from the emotional aspect.

Several studies support these findings, including Abadou(2013) on the level of personal well-being in the workplace, Massaoudi(2016) on the level of psychological well-being among teachers, and Hmihed & Chribet(2022) on the level of psychological well-being among university students. These studies have revealed a high level of psychological well-being.

These results differ from the findings of Tlemsani(2015), which showed low levels of personal psychological well-being among university students, and Douri(2021), which revealed low levels of psychological well-being among high school teachers in the Tikrit district.

Tiliouine & Belgoumidi(2009) confirmed that the Hierarchical Regression Analyses show that Religious Belief makes a significant contribution in psychological well-being

Teachers' high level of psychological well-being may be attributed to their secure employment positions in light of the current challenging economic conditions and the scarcity of job opportunities in all sectors. These teachers were integrated into their positions based on Executive Decree No. (22-461) after several years of suspending teacher recruitment contests. In addition, the income received by teachers in the national education sector has improved compared to previous years. Thus, improving their social and economic status may be a reason for their higher psychological well-being, as confirmed by Tlemsani(2015), which indicated a correlation between psychological well-being and economic and social status. The same results was confirmed by Tiliouine, h et al .(2006) where found significant differences to the PWI in favour of the higher earning group

4-2- Hypothesis 2:

H₀: There is no statistically significant difference in the level of psychological well-being among individuals in the sample based on gender.

This hypothesis was tested using an independent samples t-test, and the results are presented in the following table:

Table (04): psychological well-being and gender

	Males		Females		t-test	P-value
	N	Mean	N	Mean		
PWI	28	59	167	60.76	0.787	0.432
PA		36.82		37.89	0.950	0.343
NA		23.35		22.59	0.522	0.602
PWB		119.17		121.25	0.815	0.416

These results indicate no statistically significant differences between males and females regarding PWI, PA, NA, and overall PWB

This finding aligns with the results of the Abadou study (2013) on PWI among a sample of Sonelgaz company executives, and Tlemsani(2015) on psychological well-being among university students, and Massaoudi(2016) on psychological well-being among teachers, and Douri(2021) conducted on a sample of high school teachers in the Tikrit district. All of these results have shown no gender-based differences in psychological well-being.

However, Tiliouine et al (2006) in his study Compare on the demographic characteristics basis, the results showed significantly difference between women and men in PWI in favour of women.

This result can be explained by the similarity of the social, economic, and professional conditions for male and female teachers, considered sources of psychological well-being.

These results confirm that teachers' psychological well-being is not affected by gender, which suggests the effectiveness of programs that enhance psychological well-being for both males and females.

4-3- Hypothesis 3:

H₀: There are no statistically significant differences in the level of psychological well-being among individuals in the sample based on the language of instruction (Arabic, French, English).

This hypothesis was tested using analysis of variance (ANOVA), and the results are as follows:

Table (05): Sample statistics by language of teaching

	Language of teaching	N	Mean	SD
PWI	English	40	64.35	10.36
	French	37	58.75	13.61
	Arabic	118	59.76	10.01
	Total	195	60.51	10.97
PA	English	40	39.80	4.85
	French	37	39.16	6.18
	Arabic	118	36.60	5.29
	Total	195	37.74	5.54
NA	English	40	20.25	7.17
	French	37	27.72	6.65

	Arabic	118	22.89	6.80
	Total	195	22.70	7.15
PWB	English	40	124.40	9.89
	French	37	122.64	15.85
	Arabic	118	119.95	11.84
	Total	195	120.95	12.47

Table (06): psychological well-being and language of teaching

	Source of variance	Sum of squares	DF	Mean squares	F	P-value
PWI	Between groups	769.45	2	384.72	3.269	0.040
	Within groups	2259.26	192	117.67		
	Total	233362.71	194			
PA	Between groups	397.47	2	198.73	6.848	0.001
	Within groups	5571.70	192	29.01		
	Total	5969.17	194			
NA	Between groups	397.17	2	198.58	3.996	0.20
	Within groups	9541.57	192	49.69		
	Total	9938.74	194			
PWB	Between groups	918.78	2	459.392	3.012	0.052
	Within groups	29282.88	192	152.515		
	Total	30201.67	194			

It could be noticed from table(6) that the F-value for differences among the sample individuals in the personal well-being scale is estimated at (3.269) with a probability value of (0.04), and the F-value for differences in positive affect is estimated at (6.848) with a probability value of (0.001). The F-value for differences in negative affect is estimated at (3.996) with a probability value of (0.20). Additionally, the F-value for differences among teachers in overall psychological well-being is estimated at (30.12) with a probability value of (0.052). This suggests statistically significant differences among teachers based on the language of instruction in both personal well-being and positive affect, with no differences in negative affect or overall psychological well-being.

The absence of differences in psychological well-being based on the language of teaching can be explained by the similarity of working conditions experienced by the sample individuals in terms of the school environment, leadership style, rights and duties, and the work system.

Conclusion:

The study focused on the topic of psychological well-being among new primary school teachers, recognizing its importance and its impact on the performance of teachers, which, in turn, influences their contribution to achieving the goals of the educational system. The study relied on the life satisfaction and emotional balance scales as indicators of psychological well-being. After collecting and analyzing the data, the results indicated a high level of psychological well-being among the sample individuals. The research also showed no gender-based differences in psychological well-being and no differences in psychological well-being among Arabic, French, and English teachers. Based on these results, the study suggests the following:

1. Paying attention to the positive psychological aspects of the teacher's personality to enhance their competence.
2. Providing a suitable work environment that fosters psychological well-being.

3. Incorporating psychological support in teacher training programs during their service.
4. Intensifying research on psychological well-being in different work environments.

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